

# Jane Cable

By GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON,  
Author of "Beverly of Graustark," etc.

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## CHAPTER XXII (Continued).

Amigos along the mountain road gave information that was not worth having. A deserted village showed signs of the passage, and finally there was proof ahead that Pilar had stopped to give battle. He had reached his vantage ground. Connell and his men drew back and waited. Nightfall came and with it the spiteful crack of the Mauser rifle. A brawny trooper toppled over with a great hole in his head. Pilar's pickets could see lights in the night. The native scout reported that the big village of Concepcion was not far ahead; Pilar's men were making their stand before this rather important stronghold.

"We'll get a scrap that is a scrap, boys," said Connell exultingly. "These fellows are going to put up a fight at last. They're like bees up yonder. We've got to fall back on the company. If we don't, they'll chew us up before the little captain can get to us."

Too well did the men know the bellicose temperament of the big Irishman to think of grumbling at such a command, yet it was with a certain reluctance which invariably accompanies a backward step that the men retired to meet the advancing company.

Young Bansemer in his khaki uniform was not the immaculate, debonaire man of the drawing room. Service, though short, had been hard and grueling. His face was even handsomer with its rugged lines and set features. His eyes were clearer and darker gray; his hair seemed thicker and fairer than before; his figure more erect and sleny. The wistful look in his eyes seemed to betray hunger for action; his ever ready eagerness to be on the move told of his strength and of his weakness. He had the lean, active bearing of the panther and the restless daring of the little animal.

No man in the company had stood firmer as valiantly as he. He courted the fire of the bullet, scoffed at the rigors of the march and instinctively was a good shot with the rifle. He bore no grudge against the department at Manila; he had no grievance.

The officers recognized in him a man of parts, a man of station far above the position which he had chosen in the army. He was a source of mystery to the men of his own rank in the line—the plowboys, the teamsters, the countabouts and the ne'er-do-wells who had gone into the army from choice or discretion. At first they had called him the "dude" and had laughed at his white hands and clean jaws. His indifference to their taunts annoyed them. One day he knocked down the biggest bully of the lot and walked away without even waiting to see whether he would arise after the blow. He simply glared at the next man who chaffed. It was enough. The company held him in a new respect that forbade the reporting of the incident to the officer of the day.

Every night before he lay down to sleep, in the rice field or the barrios, he took from his pocket a leather case and gazed at the small portrait it sheltered. No one had been permitted to see him in his devotions, for that was what he called these sacred moments. His lean face, full of fierce energy all day long, softened as his eyes devoured the dainty miniature.

"Halt! Who goes there?"

A shot rang out in the stillness of the night. It was answered at once by another closer in. More shots followed, gradually increasing to a fusillade as the scouts and pickets came running back. Men sprang up from the ground, but even as they did so another volley reached them, and three men dropped with a groan and lay still. The alarm sounded clear from the bugle and echoed back from the surrounding hills. A sharp command came from the throat of the sergeant.

The company seized the stacked rifles. Captain Groce gave another order. The formation to repel attack was made in an incredibly short space of time. There was no disorder, no confusion. The little officer was as cool as if on dress parade.

"Steady, men! Wait until they're nearer!"

They had not long to wait. From all sides a horde of shouting, firing men were rushing on the little square.

"Here they are! Now, then, boys, fire!"

Volley after volley rang out. The foremost of the enemy fell at their feet. Hand to hand was the fighting. The bayonets lunged with deadly effect, but seemed powerless to thrust the mass back on itself. Men shot, hacked, stabbed and clubbed each other. It was a whirl of uplifting and descending rifles and voices.

Flerce onsets vied with the strikes of the wounded for supremacy. The grunt of men who slaughter, the gasps of the victims when the steel went home, were heard on all sides. At times the soldiers could not see on account of the sweat and blood pouring from their faces. The very air was foul from the steam from the flint and the dead. They could not breathe. A sort of vertigo overpowered them, and they only kept their feet by grasping

pling with the enemy.

To Bansemer it seemed that all his life he had been doing nothing but warding off and delivering blows. Fighting side by side with Rogers, he saw, with horror, that the soldier's rifle had been torn from his hands and that he had no weapon to defend himself, but before he could see just how it happened this individual combat had altered its aspect. Rogers had grabbed the Filipino's gun and was doing the clubbing. With renewed zest Bansemer finished with the bayonet his own assailant and saw the man fall on top of poor Adams and Belander.

Suddenly there was an exultant yell from the enemy. Instinctively Bansemer knew that one side of the square had given way. Quickly turning, he rushed to give his aid and just in time caught the arm of a native about to slash him with a huge knife. With the two gripped hands high in the air struggling for mastery the adversaries became separated a bit from the rest of the chaotic mass of friend and foe, swaying out to one side of the plaza and under the walls of a convent. Bansemer was facing it, and just at the moment that he felt his strength giving way and could see a grin of triumph on the fiendish face there came a flash and a report, and his adversary fell at his feet. Glancing up to ascertain who had fired the shot that had saved his life, he thought he saw a figure disappearing from one of the windows. The incident acted as an inspiration. Gathering together a few men, he reached the captain's side and communicated his plan. The opportunity was not to be lost. Groce gave an order; Connell repeated it. Then interpreting a temporary lull in the murderous struggle as their vantage, the men, with a cheer and dragging the field piece, broke for the building and by bayoneting and clubbing the insurgents out of the way accomplished the dash with slight loss. The soldiers hurried themselves against the stoutly barred door. It fell with a crash.

Guards were stationed and all openings and windows manned. Singularly enough, these defensive actions seemed at least temporarily unnecessary, for the watchers peering out of the windows reported that the dead alone occupied the recent field of battle. Not a single Filipino was to be seen on the plaza.

Every village has its convent or barrios. Generally speaking, their size corresponds in a certain ratio with the population. But this particular building was an exception. Dimly lighted, it gave the impression of ranking in size with many of those in far larger villages. Immediately the thought came to the invaders that the church might have sheltered the insurgent leaders. Aguineldo or Pilar might have directed the attack from inside these walls. Orders were given to search every corner and crevice to ferret out concealed foes. A rear window was open, proving that flight could have been by that means of egress. Bansemer was almost positive that the bullet which had killed his assailant had come from one of the upper windows, but whether from friend or foe was undeterminable. Were they not in a cunningly planned trap of some kind?

Considerably perplexed, Bansemer decided to keep on his guard. He was ruthlessly searching the chancel when a deep groan caught his attention. Presently, as he paused to listen, a dark figure leaped toward him from a recess back of the altar. The flash of a pistol blotted him and momentarily a sharp pain shot through his arm, but he recovered in time to throw his tall frame forward upon the slight, almost indistinguishable figure. There was a short struggle, and before his comrade could reach him his adversary was safely pinned to the floor. A moment later the torches in the hands of his friends were burning brightly above the figure of his captive—a slender boy who choked with terror and rage.

"Who are you, my young friend?" asked Bansemer, holding the boy at arm's length.

There was no answer from the tightly closed lips, and Bansemer shook him a little roughly. Then for the first time he perceived that he was not a Filipino. His skin was dark, but not the skin of the natives. The handsome, boyish face had regular features European in character.

"Spaniard?" inquired Bansemer a trifle more gently, and again the boy flashed a look of hatred into his captor's eyes.

"Look here, my young spalpeen," said Connell gruffly, "Filipino or Spaniard, if you want to save your hide you'd better answer questions—and no lies, do you hear?"

"Flerce onsets vied with the strikes of the wounded for supremacy. The grunt of men who slaughter, the gasps of the victims when the steel went home, were heard on all sides. At times the soldiers could not see on account of the sweat and blood pouring from their faces. The very air was foul from the steam from the flint and the dead. They could not breathe. A sort of vertigo overpowered them, and they only kept their feet by grasping

see that he is dying?" cried the boy piteously in broken English. "He cannot fight you; he's dying," and then in a perfect frenzy of rage to Bansemer. "Let me go—pig!"

Not until afterward did Bansemer recall that in the general excitement it was the boy who dragged him along to the spot. And in spite of the solemnity of the scene there was something in his manner of delivering the insult that amused rather than angered the American.

"Plucky little devil!" he said half aloud.

Again the sick man groaned, tried to rise from the blankets and speak, but only to fall back moaning. Connell cautioned him against exertion and promised that no harm should come to either of them. While he reported the discovery to Captain Groce, he had the man carried to another part of the church and there made comfortable. For the first time now Bansemer began to notice the pain in his arm. Somewhat angrily he turned to the boy: "Come! Give an account of yourself! How came you here?"

"Prisoners," was the sullen answer. "Of the Filipinos?" Bansemer asked in surprise.

"Yes."

"Then why did you try to kill me?"

"I hate you both! We Spaniards, have we not as much to fear from you? What difference does color make in bruter?"

"By the holy apostles! You're a gritty young 'un!" growled the returning sergeant. "Who's the other chap?"

"My brother—he's dying," said the boy, his voice softening. "Holy Virgin, save him! For weeks we've been in the hands of Aguineldo's men. He's been so ill all the time. Have you a doctor?"

"A surgeon will probably be with us before long," was the sergeant's evasive reply.

Bansemer looked searchingly at Connell. What he saw in the other's eyes caused him a sharp pang of grief. Both men turned their faces away for a moment, and it was with a gulp that Connell continued:

"Your brother will have the best of care if we get out of this mess. You are both safe. We are not fighting the Spaniards." And then pertinently, "So these were Aguineldo's men?"

"Yes. He was here directing the fight," the boy answered.

"Aguineldo here?" This and other ejaculations of surprise and anger

burst in chorus from every throat. But as suddenly they were followed by expressions of chagrin, for by contrasting the present situation with that which they had anticipated, this information had succeeded in intensifying their mortification.

But notwithstanding his share of the universal disappointment, a hasty reflection of preceding events convinced Graydon that personally he had little ground for complaint against the late occupants of the convent, for unintentional as undoubtedly had been the act through which at the very point of death his existence had been preserved, there was no evidence to refute the hypothesis that the shot which had killed his assailant in the plaza had been fired by one of the insurgents under cover.

"Great Scott!" was the exclamation to which he gave utterance. "Once more, I suppose, I owe my life to the blundering marksmanship of a Filipino!"

This half-hearted acknowledgment of his strange indebtedness educed from his companions no recognition other than a puzzled stare from the sergeant and an enigmatical smile on the face of the young Spaniard. Connell proceeded with his examination:

"Why did you leave you here?"

"They had no time to take us with them when you broke in," was the boy's answer. "Aguineldo was on his way to some village where his family is in hiding. The scouts told him of your presence. Then he determined not to wait for Pilar, but to surprise you. We never rested day or night. My poor brother—how he suffered!"

"Yes, yes, but why are they carrying you on a march like this?"

"My brother is the only man who knows where the Spanish gold was hidden when our war was ended—I mean the gold that came up with guns and ammunition. Aguineldo is looking for the hiding place. My father, a high officer in the Spanish army, died of the fever last winter. We were stolen from our house in Manila by Aguineldo's men and have been going from place to place ever since. We have not told of the hiding place. The Americans do not need gold, do they?"

The boy laughed sarcastically. "How many men has Aguineldo?"

"Three hundred or more. I would advise you to look out for Pilar. He, too, may come at any moment."

Scarcely had the words left his mouth when a storm of yell came from outside the convent, and immediately the boy rushed to his brother's side.

"Great Censor, there's a thousand of them!" cried Rogers.

Instantly every man made for the position assigned to him. The gun was in readiness. Outside the Mauers rattled, bullets coming from all quarters and thumping sharply against the opposite walls with a patter that warned the Americans against standing erect.

Occasionally a scout would peep from a window and take a shot into the darkness, but these ventures were few. All lights were extinguished. The men fired at the spots from which burst the flames of rifles, then dropped suddenly. After awhile the firing of the Filipinos dwindled into a shot now and then.

"Keep low! They don't dare risk a charge! Be ready to defend the door!" Captain Groce commanded.

The night wore on, and with the cessation of hostilities confidence increased. Re-enforcements were not far off, and it did not seem possible that the sounds of battle could not be heard. The men, worn out by the exciting events of the day, were generally silent. Sergeant Connell, however, was an exception.

"Get up! Not a bit of it," he was saying, "the dirty little cowards! Major March will be here in the shake of a dead lamb's tail."

An hour later Bansemer, his rifle in hand, sitting near one of the windows, suddenly felt some one tugging at his arm. Turning, he saw the Spanish boy.

"Won't you come and help me to carry my brother behind the stone wall?" he was saying. "He is exposed to the bullets and cannot move himself."

"Willingly!" and Graydon followed his lead. As if he was a child, he picked up the gaunt Spaniard and carefully bore him to the place of shelter, but despite all that he could do to bide his suffering the pain in his arm, which the removal of the man had increased, was such for a moment that he felt faint and staggered. The boy was quick to notice it and quickly asked:

"What is the matter? Wounded?"

"It's nothing; merely a scratch."

"Oh, I know. Why, it's your arm, and I—The boy's face crimsoned with shame and contrition. Through the semidarkness the blush escaped Graydon's notice, but not so the truly feminine little shriek of dismay as he touched and felt the wet sleeve.

"It was I who did it! Oh, how can you ever forgive me?"

Graydon, dumfounded, stared in wonder.

"What?" he exclaimed; "you're a girl?"

"Yes, I'm his sister," pointing to the dying man; then, with some embarrassment: "These clothes? They are the only ones they would give me. You see, a girl would have been a burden; a boy none at all. Do you think that had I been a man you could so easily have overpowered me? No?"

The slim, little figure drew itself up straight and defiant before him. Despite the loose, ugly garments of the Filipinos, Graydon noticed for the first time that the figure was perfectly molded and high bred. She swept off the wide hat she wore, and the man saw a mass of dark hair done up tightly on her head. But even while he gazed her mood changed. She became subserviently anxious and begged him to let her attend to his arm. She pleaded so hard that, to please her, he yielded. Water was obtained from somewhere, the slight flesh wound washed and then, disappearing into the darkness, to his amazement she returned almost instantly with some bandages and dressed his arm.

While this surgical operation was going on Graydon, for the life of him, could not resist the temptation to ask her again why she had tried to shoot him. At first, so terribly in earnest did she take the question and beg for mercy, that he smiled at her, and then, seeing his amusement, she said coquettishly:

"How could I possibly have known that you were so nice? Besides, I had always heard you Americans referred to as brutes."

Graydon laughed; then suddenly his face became very grave. The realization of her terrible situation had dawned upon him. A woman among a crowd of rough soldiers! Her brother and protector dying! And all surrounded by hordes of savage enemies who at any moment might kill them! The thought dismissed all pleasantness from his mind. Something must be done, and at once. Presently he asked:

"What is your name?"

"My father was Colonel Ramos Jose Velasquez. That also is my brother's name, except that he is not an officer. I am Teresa Fortune Velasquez. My mother was English, a sister of Sir William Fortune. She is dead. For ten years we have lived in Manila."

"You won't mind if I call the sergeant, will you?" The girl nodded a slightly bewildered consent as Graydon moved rapidly toward the others. Shortly he returned with the gallant Spaniard.

"Senorita," began Connell, mopping his forehead and assuming his most polite manner, "you are perfectly safe with us, and as quickly as possible your brother and yourself shall be sent back to Manila. You are a brave slip of a girl, and we boys respect bravery in whatever dress—boy or girl."

She looked at him in grateful surprise, and her lips trembled.

"Did I get out your friend?"

"Possibly, senorita," he answered

with almost Chesterfieldian grace. "But we are your friends."

Outside once more the Mauers were rattling, and Connell, with a word of parting, hastily took his leave. Graydon, on the point of returning to his post, was prevented by the girl.

"You were gentle with me even when I tried to—Don't risk your life there. Shoot from that narrow gate."

Bansemer dragged an altar chair up to the grated window and perched himself upon it.

Bansemer did all in his power to comfort and console her. It was to him that she clung in her despair. He had been her captor, and yet it had been he who stood forth in his might to defend her and the loved one who was dead. At nightfall the dead were buried in that faroff wilderness, their humble graves marked and recorded before the time when the government could come to give other graves in other lands to these who had given their lives. Velasquez was laid beside the Americans. Teresa, a shivering, sobbing little figure in the garb of an insurgent soldier, was supported by big Graydon Bansemer. There was no service except the short army ritual; there was no priest or pastor; there was but one real mourner—a pretty, heart broken girl who lay for hours beside the rude mound on the hillside.

Word came back at nightfall that the detachments were to form a junction at one of the big villages westward in two days. The instructions were that the wounded Filipinos should be left in the village, where native women and doctors would care for them.

"What in thunder are we to do with the girl?" was the question that came from the officer in command. More than one man scratched his head thoughtfully and looked toward the disturbing element that had come into the army. She was sitting alone and disconsolate in front of the church.

"There's no way to send her back to her friends, and we can't leave her here," said Bansemer.

"But, gee whiz! We can't take her on a hike like this," protested the sergeant. "She'll be in the way, and she'll give out, and all that. Besides, what would we do with a woman around all the time?"

"I fancy she can hike all right," said Graydon. "Major March wouldn't expect us to leave her behind. That would be heartless."

By the time the party and guides were ready to start on their forced march the opinion unanimously expressed was that Teresa Velasquez should go forward also, come what might. She had pleaded so hard and so effectively that the men were fairly swept off their feet in a storm of sympathy.

"If she gives out we'll carry her," roared a deeply impressed young man with long red whiskers.

"And when we get up to the command we'll make them derved correspondents take turn about walkin', so she can ride a pony all the time. They've got no business ridin' anyhow."

And so with rosy confidence in the fitness of things and a just belief in the charity of Major March, the detachment marched out into the hills, the ward of the company trudging bravely beside the tall and envied Mr. Bansemer, who, by the way, aside from being politely attentive, did not exhibit any undue signs of exaltation.

The presence of a woman—and a very pretty one at that, with a sadness in her eyes that was appealing—served only to send his thoughts bounding back to the girl he had left behind. He grew more and more morose and silent as the day wore on. At times the tired, lonely girl at his side lagged and cast wondering, piteous glances at him. Her woman's intuition told her that this man did not belong where he was. It told her also that he had a secret and that one of her sex was deeply involved.

The events of the next two weeks are of small consequence in this narrative, which deals not so much with the history and mystery of the campaign in the fall of '99 as with the welfare and emotions of a single soldier at the front. Aguineldo and Pilar had become refugees by this time, hunted and hounded from place to place with relentless fervor. Pilar was somewhere in the hills with his men, the pride of the insurgent forces; Aguineldo's remnant had scurried off in another direction, and General Tono was on the coast with what was left of the scattered force.

The net about Gregorio del Pilar was being drawn in and tightened. The closing week in November saw him driven to the last extremity. The tragedy of Tlilad pass was near at hand.

Teresa Velasquez never faltered, never tired. She proved herself to be no incubance. Day after day, the officer in command expected the expedition which would take her back to Manila. Forces came up from the south, but none were ready to go back.

She was an inspiration to the camp. Men who had forgotten their manners completely brushed them up and danced attendance upon the girl in the Filipino uniform.

Every man prayed for opportunity to do brave deeds, and when chance came she was permitted to witness heroisms that savored of the boyhood malady known as "showing off."

The reserved but comiserate Bansemer was her closest friend and confidant. One evening as they sat side by side watching the preparations for supper she turned suddenly and announced that she knew he was dying of love for some one. He started, and his hand trembled.

"Tell me about her," she demanded. "It was a piquancy, a day imitating love in this girl that grief and hardship had been strong enough to console."

There was a short struggle. But as suddenly they were followed by expressions of chagrin, for by contrasting the present situation with that which they had anticipated, this information had succeeded in intensifying their mortification.

But notwithstanding his share of the universal disappointment, a hasty reflection of preceding events convinced Graydon that personally he had little ground for complaint against the late occupants of the convent, for unintentional as undoubtedly had been the act through which at the very point of death his existence had been preserved, there was no evidence to refute the hypothesis that the shot which had killed his assailant in the plaza had been fired by one of the insurgents under cover.

"Great Scott!" was the exclamation to which he gave utterance. "Once more, I suppose, I owe my life to the blundering marksmanship of a Filipino!"

This half-hearted acknowledgment of his strange indebtedness educed from his companions no recognition other than a puzzled stare from the sergeant and an enigmatical smile on the face of the young Spaniard. Connell proceeded with his examination:

"Why did you leave you here?"

"They had no time to take us with them when you broke in," was the boy's answer. "Aguineldo was on his way to some village where his family is in hiding. The scouts told him of your presence. Then he determined not to wait for Pilar, but to surprise you. We never rested day or night. My poor brother—how he suffered!"

"Yes, yes, but why are they carrying you on a march like this?"

"My brother is the only man who knows where the Spanish gold was hidden when our war was ended—I mean the gold that came up with guns and ammunition. Aguineldo is looking for the hiding place. My father, a high officer in the Spanish army, died of the fever last winter. We were stolen from our house in Manila by Aguineldo's men and have been going from place to place ever since. We have not told of the hiding place. The Americans do not need gold, do they?"

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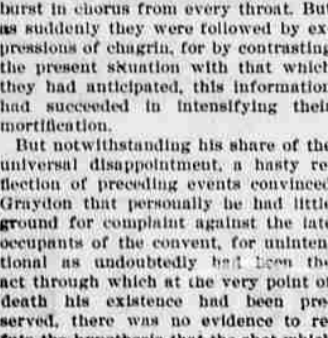
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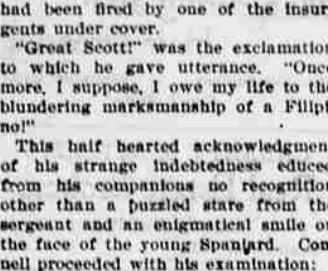
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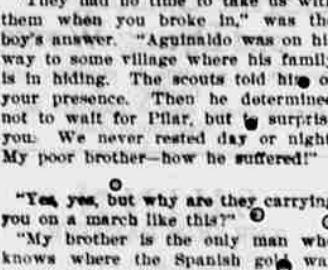
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"You were gentle with me even when I tried to—Don't risk your life there. Shoot from that narrow gate."

Bansemer dragged an altar chair up to the grated window and perched himself upon it.

Bansemer did all in his power to comfort and console her. It was to him that she clung in her despair. He had been her captor, and yet it had been he who stood forth in his might to defend her and the loved one who was dead. At nightfall the dead were buried in that faroff wilderness, their humble graves marked and recorded before the time when the government could come to give other graves in other lands to these who had given their lives. Velasquez was laid beside the Americans. Teresa, a shivering, sobbing little figure in the garb of an insurgent soldier, was supported by big Graydon Bansemer. There was no service except the short army ritual; there was no priest or pastor; there was but one real mourner—a pretty, heart broken girl who lay for hours beside the rude mound on the hillside.

Word came back at nightfall that the detachments were to form a junction at one of the big villages westward in two days. The instructions were that the wounded Filipinos should be left in the village, where native women and doctors would care for them.

"What in thunder are we to do with the girl?" was the question that came from the officer in command. More than one man scratched his head thoughtfully and looked toward the disturbing element that had come into the army. She was sitting alone and disconsolate in front of the church.

"There's no way to send her back to her friends, and we can't leave her here," said Bansemer.

"But, gee whiz! We can't take her on a hike like this," protested the sergeant. "She'll be in the way, and she'll give out, and all that. Besides, what would we do with a woman around all the time?"

"I fancy she can hike all right," said Graydon. "Major March wouldn't expect us to leave her behind. That would be heartless."

By the time the party and guides were ready to start on their forced march the opinion unanimously expressed was that Teresa Velasquez should go forward also, come what might. She had pleaded so hard and so effectively that the men were fairly swept off their feet in a storm of sympathy.

"If she gives out we'll carry her," roared a deeply impressed young man with long red whiskers.

"And when we get up to the command we'll make them derved correspondents take turn about walkin', so she can ride a pony all the time. They've got no business ridin' anyhow."

And so with rosy confidence in the fitness of things and a just belief in the charity of Major March, the detachment marched out into the hills, the ward of the company trudging bravely beside the tall and envied Mr. Bansemer, who, by the way, aside from being politely attentive, did not exhibit any undue signs of exaltation.

The presence of a woman—and a very pretty one at that, with a sadness in her eyes that was appealing—served only to send his thoughts bounding back to the girl he had left behind. He grew more and more morose and silent as the day wore on. At times the tired, lonely girl at his side lagged and cast wondering, piteous glances at him. Her woman's intuition told her that this man did not belong where he was. It told her also that he had a secret and that one of her sex was deeply involved.

The events of the next two weeks are of small consequence in this narrative, which deals not so much with the history and mystery of the campaign in the fall of '99 as with the welfare and emotions of a single soldier at the front. Aguineldo and Pilar had become refugees by this time, hunted and hounded from place to place with relentless fervor. Pilar was somewhere in the hills with his men, the pride of the insurgent forces; Aguineldo's remnant had scurried off in another direction, and General Tono was on the coast with what was left of the scattered force.

The net about Gregorio del Pilar was being drawn in and tightened. The closing week in November saw him driven to the last extremity. The tragedy of Tlilad pass was near at hand.

Teresa Velasquez never faltered, never tired. She proved herself to be no incubance. Day after day, the officer in command expected the expedition which would take her back to Manila. Forces came up from the south, but none were ready to go back.

She was an inspiration to the camp. Men who had forgotten their manners completely brushed them up and danced attendance upon the girl in the Filipino uniform.

Every man prayed for opportunity to do brave deeds, and when chance came she was permitted to witness heroisms that savored of the boyhood malady known as "showing off."

The reserved but comiserate Bansemer was her closest friend and confidant. One evening as they sat side by side watching the preparations for supper she turned suddenly and announced that she knew he was dying of love for some one. He started, and his hand trembled.

"Tell me about her," she demanded. "It was a piquancy, a day imitating love in this girl that grief and hardship had been strong enough to console."

There was a short struggle. But as suddenly they were followed by expressions of chagrin, for by contrasting the present situation with that which they had anticipated, this information had succeeded in intensifying their mortification.

But notwithstanding his share of the universal disappointment, a hasty reflection of preceding events convinced Graydon that personally he had little ground for complaint against the late occupants of the convent, for unintentional as undoubtedly had been the act through which at the very point of death his existence had been preserved, there was no evidence to refute the hypothesis that the shot which had killed his assailant in the plaza had been fired by one of the insurgents under cover.

"Great Scott!" was the exclamation to which he gave utterance. "Once more, I suppose, I owe my life to the blundering marksmanship of a Filipino!"

This half-hearted acknowledgment of his strange indebtedness educed from his companions no recognition other than a puzzled stare from the sergeant and an enigmatical smile on the face of the young Spaniard. Connell proceeded with his examination:

"Why did you leave you here?"

"They had no time to take us with them when you broke in," was the boy's answer. "Aguineldo was on his way to some village where his family is in hiding. The scouts told him of your presence. Then he determined not to wait for Pilar, but to surprise you. We never rested day or night. My poor brother—how he suffered!"

"Yes, yes, but why are they carrying you on a march like this?"

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